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Stricklen's "Walk-Off" Goal Sends Pirates To PBC Final, 2-1





Posted: Nov 06, 2009

EVANS, Ga. - Junior **Lianne Stricklen** headed in a corner kick from Kristin Burton with one second remaining to give the No. 21-ranked and second-seeded Armstrong Atlantic State women's soccer squad a 2-1 Peach Belt Conference semifinal victory over third-seeded Lander, sending the Pirates into Sunday's PBC Tournament Championship match at Blanchard Woods Park in Evans, Ga.

The Pirates (14-3-3) advance to their third PBC Tournament Championship match in five years, where they will face eighth-seeded Montevallo - a 2-1 winner over fourth-seeded GCSU - at 1:00 p.m. Lander (11-4-2) will await word of a possible at-large berth from the NCAA Championships Committee on Monday.

Burton gave the Pirates an early 1-0 first-half lead in the 15th minute, slotting a ball in past Lander keeper Chelsea Beetch from five yards out. The three-time PBC Player of the Year's 91st career goal puts her into a tie for 10th place on the all-time Division II goal scoring chart with Kim Brown of Central Oklahoma.

The 1-0 lead stood into halftime as the Pirates outshot the Bearcats, 9-4.

With about 15 minutes remaining in the second half, Lander upped the pressure and finally got the equalizer in the 82nd minute. A failed clearance by the Pirates eventually found Christina Barbour, who fed it to Kendall Couch right in front of the goal for the easy score, knotting things up at 1-1 and setting up the late-match dramatics.

With 25 seconds remaining in regulation, Kristin Burton dribbled in and took a shot from the left flank that deflected off of a Lander defender for a corner kick. Burton retrieved the ball and sent a corner kick into the box with eight seconds left from the left side. Stricklen got a head on the ball and it wound up in the right far corner, beating Beetch and the Bearcats with one second remaining. The clock expired right after the restart and the Pirates were into the finals.

AASU finished the match outshooting the Bearcats, 19-10, and owned an 8-5 advantage in corner kicks. Beetch made eight saves in net for Lander, while Tracey Mitchell made four saves in net for the Pirates.

The winner of the PBC Tournament earns an automatic bid to the 2009 NCAA Division II Women's Soccer Championships, which will be announced on Monday night at 7:00 p.m.



ARMSTRONG STATE UNIVERSITY

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